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An International Review of Cultural Consumption Research

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Abstract

Despite the effects of the crisis, several studies show that there has been an increase in cultural production in all the most important western countries over the last twenty years. Nevertheless, the dimensions of the flows of demand are changing: the lowering of the threshold of perceived accessibility to the cultural contents on offer is resulting in new population segments using them. The modalities of cultural product consumption are also changing, and are increasingly influenced by the direct involvement of the consumer in the creative processes. On the other side, the competition to conquer consumers' free time has intensified because more figures are now involved, both from the cultural industry and outside. The cultural offer has multiplied and become more differentiated. But while this consumption is changing dimensions and modality, a gap is emerging in the information and knowledge of cultural consumption behaviour, mainly due to a lack of innovative official statistical measurements. The present paper wants to understand how academic literature reacted to the need for information on cultural consumption, that became widespread during 2000. Our main objective is to offer an initial overview of scientific literature of the first decade of the twenty-first century, while trying to understand the future research trends. The analysis showed that great attention is still dedicated to the segmentation of cultural demand, but the analysis of motivations underlying cultural consumption is significantly acquiring more importance. Moreover, we identified vast research areas in which cultural consumption has only been partially studied, such as: social consumption, studies on individual businesses, methodological triangulation, and the operative implications for business management.

Keywords: Cultural Consumption, Marketing Research, Segmentation, Motivations

JEL Code: M0, M30, M31, L82

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1. Introduction

Despite the effects of the crisis, which continue to make themselves felt in the figures regarding 2009, studies show that there has been an increase in cultural production in all the most important western countries over the last twenty years. It seems that companies are paying more attention to the cultural sectors (Barber 2008; Cheng 2006). The so-called post-industrial economic systems seem to have started to grasp the potential linked to creativity and cultural production: for example, the diffusion of networks that try to combine culture and economic development, the migration of culture towards the basis of production chains of value through design and innovation, and the increase in the financial backing of cultural events. The European Commission declared 2009 “European Year of Creativity and Innovation” through education and culture, setting itself the goals of increasing awareness, promoting political debate in the member Countries, and fostering the development of creativity, innovation and cultural competences.

The dimensions of the flows of demand are changing: the lowering of the threshold of perceived accessibility to the cultural contents on offer is resulting in new population segments using them. This is in turn due to the massification processes leading some cultural productions away from being perceived as targeted to cultural élites. The modalities of cultural product consumption are also changing, and are increasingly influenced by the direct involvement of the consumer in the creative processes. The fruition process tends to become an interactive exchange of contents, the production of which is potentially distributed and shared according to a typically ‘open’ scheme (Calcagno, Faccipieri and Rocco, 2005). This means that the demand seems more ready to act, participate, transform and complete the innovative metaphors on offer.

The competition to conquer consumers’ free time has intensified because more figures are now involved, both from the cultural industry and outside. The cultural offer has multiplied and become more differentiated, offering consumers new cultural experiences that are characterised by the combination of culture and entertainment, and the intense use of new technologies.

There is a parallel to these signals in cultural consumption and its strengthened position in the field of the system of values of European citizens, highlighted by the Eurobarometer study 2007. In the main national statistics on the consumption behaviour of Europeans, the cultural component appears to be constantly growing regarding spending, substance and participation. Nevertheless, the National Statistic Systems have considerable difficulty in portraying the dynamics of cultural consumption. First of all, because they usually only measure consumption that foresees ‘ticketing’ (the following are all missing for example: the fruition of monuments, free exhibitions, free concerts, landscape and a wide range of local cultural micro-events in general). Secondly, because the items of cultural consumption are mixed with those of other types of consumption that do not belong to the cultural sector in the strict sense of the term (for example, free time, holidays) (Causi and Tuccini, 2007, 10).

The countless ad hoc studies carried out in the field by individual cultural institutions, by specific territorial areas or administrative fields to promote or assess sector policies or marketing/communication strategies are also unable to monitor the changes in cultural consumption in sufficient depth. Very often these studies:

- are carried out occasionally;
- change their structure from one study to the next;
- neglect the fact that cultural consumption is often of a social nature and therefore do not detect the real and virtual interactions between the consumers;
- neglect the fact that an individual buys several heterogeneous cultural products; the misunderstanding of bundling choices means that the competition between the cultural attractions and the alternative offers for consumers' free time cannot be clearly expressed.

It can therefore be stated that while this consumption is changing dimensions and modality, there is a gap in the information and knowledge of cultural consumption behaviour. How did specialised academic literature on the studies of cultural consumption react in the face of this need for information and knowledge that became widespread during 2000? Which themes did scientific and managerial research concentrate on and how did it try to understand cultural consumption?

2. Cultural consumption in academic literature

Owing to the multidisciplinary nature of the subject of cultural consumption, an overall analysis of the literature on the subject has not yet been carried out. There are, however, literature reviews regarding certain research areas such as the motivation of cultural consumption (Caldwell and Woodside, 2003), the experiential approach of emotion research (Taylor, 2000) and the consumer's repurchase intention (Hume, 2008).

The main objective of this paper is to offer an initial overview of recent scientific literature on the consumption of cultural products, while trying to understand the research trends (in English with the addition of the most important Italian journal) in the first decade of this century. For this purpose, the volumes published from 2000 to 2009 of seven of the main international journals with contributions on the economy and management of culture were analysed ("International Journal of Arts Management", "Journal of Cultural Heritage", "Journal of Cultural Economics", "Museum International", "International Journal of Heritage Studies", "International Journal of Cultural Policy", "Cultural Trends") and the Italian journal "Economia della Cultura". Results of studies conducted by professional research institutes known to the authors were included only to the extent that they have been published in one of the abovementioned journals.

The contributions considered to be of interest were selected by identifying those articles that had the *study of consumption of cultural products* as a general objective of their research. On the basis of this criteria a total of 68 articles were selected, published in five of the eight journals that were analysed ("International

Journal of Arts Management”, “Journal of Cultural Economics”, “Museum International”, “Cultural Trends”, “Economia della Cultura”).

The *first stage* of revising the literature consisted in dividing the articles in question into three different groups, on the basis of the **type of research objective**. The groups were created on the basis of three types of objectives that were mutually exclusive, grouping together the contributions that had the objective of studying:

- a) the *relationship between the consumer and artwork*, in other words the experience of consumption of cultural products by part of the public, analysed both according to a holistic and cognitive approach, in its specific stages (18 articles);
- b) the *motivations underlying the consumption of cultural products*, paying particular attention to specific factors, of both endogenous and exogenous origins, that drive the behaviour of the cultural consumer (23 articles);
- c) the different *segments of cultural demand*, identifying the distinctive characteristics of consumer groups with homogeneous behaviour regarding specific products (27 articles).

These three groups of articles will be presented in this division with their salient characteristics in the following paragraphs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.

The *second stage* of this study concerned the in-depth analysis of the articles belonging to each of the aforementioned three groups, with the aim of identifying the main characteristics of the contributions that had a common research objective. The analysis was based on the following four variables:

a) the variable “**research object**”, identifying the specific object in question chosen by the authors to follow their own research objectives, was defined beforehand in three different modalities:

- *Psycho-sociology of the consumer*: this modality identifies those studies that focus on the subjective aspects that characterise the consumer, such as the psychological, emotional, cognitive and aesthetic aspects;
- *Social consumption*: this modality identifies those studies on the specific characteristics of social behaviour of cultural product consumptions, such as brand-community, cultural associations, and spontaneous cultural communities (for example, those created on the web);
- *Socio-demo-geographic variables of the consumer*: the study object identified by this modality is the group of specific, "objective" and "observable" characteristic variables of the cultural consumer.

b) the “**analysis level**” is the variable that identifies the breadth of the level of analysis adopted, stated in three possible ways:

- *Multi-sectorial*: This level identifies the studies carried out on cultural consumption in the broadest sense, analysing the specific characteristics of transversal cultural consumption in the entire industry;
- *Sectorial*: The sectorial focus corresponds to the studies carried out on a particular sector of the cultural industry; implications and results are restricted to the characteristics of the sector in question (for example, the music sector, the performing arts, etc.);

- *Business area*: This modality identifies the research carried out on specific activity areas in the sectors of cultural industry, the results and implications of which are highly specific (for example, classical music, contemporary art exhibitions, etc.).

c) the “**methodology**” variable intends to identify which methodological approaches to the study of cultural consumption are the most widespread in the journals in question. These possible approaches were then classified in three groups:

- *Qualitative*: to identify the studies that were mainly carried out on one or more qualitative methods, such as content analysis, interviews with specific subjects, questionnaires for in-depth interviews, focus groups, case studies, etc.;
- *Quantitative*: to identify those studies that were mainly characterised by statistical analysis methods of “objective” data (for example, regression models, etc.);
- *Triangular*: to identify contributions that offered a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

d) the variable regarding “**managerial implications**” regards the indication of the possible effects of the studies on cultural consumption in terms of managerial actions, on the basis of the hypothesis that cultural organisations might adopt management tools formulated ad hoc or ones that are already used in other sectors.

This variable was expressed in three ways:

- *Strategic implications*: to identify studies with implications of a prevalently strategic nature, for example possible repositioning in the average or long term of certain kinds of cultural organisations regarding new market trends;
- *Operative implications*: classified those contributions with general proposals of an operative nature, for example specific implications regarding the use of the managerial incentive of cultural organisations;
- *Not present*: if no implications were present.

Following the systematic analysis of the contributions published over the last ten years in the selected journals, this revision identifies certain trends in the approach to the subject of cultural consumption, both from the perspective of contents (object, analysis level, implications) and from the perspective of the research methodology, which will be presented in paragraph 2.4.

2.1 The relationship between consumer and art work

The trend regarding the relationship between the consumer and art work concerns those articles, the research objective of which was the study of the experience of cultural production consumption by the public. Two main approaches were identified in the analysis of the relationship:

- *The cognitive approach* in which cultural experience is interpreted as a process that consists in different stages: study of information, construction of the basis of knowledge necessary for consumption, consumption stage (with the relative social implications), acquisition of new cultural capital;
- *The emotional approach*, which focuses on the psychological aspects of the choice of cultural product and the implications that ensue from such consumption.

A synthesis of the two approaches is to be found in the *experiential interpretation* of cultural consumption, according to which the relationship between the consumer and art work is interpreted holistically. Cultural consumption is of an experiential kind as proposed by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982): “*the experiential perspective is phenomenological in spirit and regards consumption as a primarily subjective state of consumptions with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, and aesthetic criteria*”.

The cognitive and emotional perspectives can therefore be synthesised in the consideration of the value of cultural experience as a sum made up of the cognitive value of the attributes of the cultural product (for example, the material elements, price and quality) and the emotional (and therefore subjective) value that derives from the cultural experience as a whole (Hume, 2008). If the cognitive value is the result of a costs-benefits analysis, in which the costs of transaction and the choices in the various stages of the process are considered, the emotional value is derived from an evaluation of the psychological aspects of the experience by means of an outline of individual preferences (Bourgeon-Renault, 2001).

Although the distinction between the two cognitive and emotional approaches seems destined to become less pronounced, gradually appearing as a difference between the two nuances of the experiential approach to cultural consumption, analysis of the literature showed that there are still some contributions in which the traditional *cognitive approach* was adopted. Of these, the main subjects that were analysed were: the cognitive value of the cultural experience (Alberini et al., 2003), the behaviour of the consumer in the process stages of consumption (Edson, 2001; Bourdeau et al., 2001; Bazzanini, 2003), and the impact of the new technologies on different phases of the consumption processes (O’Sullivan, 2007; Courvoisier and Courvoisier, 2008).

Most of the studies selected adopted the experiential approach.

This research subject seems to be of primary importance in the literature of the last decade, in which the main themes to be dealt with were: *interaction between the consumer and artwork* (Knerr, 2000; Fernández and Benlloch, 2000; Mendes Zancheti, 2002; Geber, 2006; Bussell and Forbes, 2006; Belfiore and Bennett, 2007), *co-production* (of contents, meanings and cultural performances themselves) (Davallon et al., 2000; Goldman, 2007; Radbourne et al., 2009), and *the immersion experience* (Carù and Cova, 2005; Collin-Lachaud and Passebois, 2008).

- a) The theme of the *interaction* between the consumer and art work includes contributions that mainly focus on two aspects: the diffusion of new technologies in cultural consumption that allow the public’s increasing interaction with artistic productions (Knerr, 2000; Fernández and Benlloch, 2000; Mendes

Zancheti, 2002; Geber, 2006), and those with the specific characteristics of interaction in the field of cultural consumption (Bussel and Forbes, 2006; Belfiore and Bennet, 2007). In particular, Belfiore and Bennet's work (2007) offers an analysis of the factors that contribute to the characterization of the aesthetic experience, in other words, of the “*determinants of impact*” of the artistic experience on the consumer. The decisive factors the study identified are distinguished as follows: inherent to the individual interacting with the art work, inherent to the art work, and the *environmental factors* that are extraneous to both the individual and the art work. The authors conclude that the decisive factors regarding the interaction between the consumer and artwork are an inevitable factor in the analysis of the aesthetic experience since they play a key role in characterising its multidimensional and subjective nature.

- b) The direct involvement of the consumer in the creation of the cultural experience is a subject that seems to be of certain importance on the panorama of cultural consumption and several studies offer an initial analysis of the processes of the *co-production* of the value of the cultural experience (Davallon et al. (2000) put forward the concept of the *expert visitor*). In view of the increasing demand for the personalisation of the consumption experience by the public, the cultural offer should be able to respond with greater flexibility and involvement of the consumer (Radbourne et al., 2009). According to this approach, the measure of the quality of the artistic performance is also based on the experience the consumer is offered. The authors suggest a measure for performance quality based on four variables: transmission of knowledge/information, risk management, authenticity and interactivity of the performance, and collective engagement. This measurement foresees that significant weight will be attributed to the variables characterising the interaction with the consumer, thus suggesting that the quality of artistic products also has to be evaluated on the basis of their ability to involve the spectators in the creation of the cultural experience. While involvement in the production is highlighted here as a quality index of the performance, Goldman's work (2007) highlights another important aspect, i.e. that the co-production of meanings is a fundamental aspect for the cultural growth of art work on the one hand, and for the public on the other.
- c) Carù and Cova (2005) studied the *cultural immersion experience*, concentrating on the analysis of the facilities that contribute to the individual consumer's immersion in the cultural experience, more specifically, in classical music concerts. The results suggest that the main elements that characterise the musical experience as a whole, apart from the subject itself (the music) and the characteristics of the environment where this takes place, are specific rituals (that help the consumer draw closer to the experience) and the guidance of the orchestra conductor. The authors conclude by highlighting the importance of helping the consumer in the immersion process of the artistic process, looking after those facilities that are generally considered difficult to manage because they are linked to the relationship/interaction with the client in a particular way. Collin-Lachaud and Passebois' contribution (2008) deals with a different aspect, more specifically, the use of new technologies in scientifically-oriented museums (natural history, ecology, prehistory, geology, etc.). The objective of this study was to

analyse the benefits of using ICT in the visitors' cultural experience when visiting museums, in particular by measuring the sources of value influenced by the use of immersive technologies. According to the results of this study, the ICT have a positive impact on all five sources of value identified by the authors: *function, cognition, affectivity and sensoriality, play and escapism*. An interesting implication of the use of immersive technologies highlighted by the analysis was that since they are mainly directed at individual consumption, they have a negative impact on the social value of the cultural experience. On the other hand, the positive impacts, in addition to those on the sources of value of the experience, can be identified in the increase in curiosity towards the cultural offer, and its appeal, which results in an increase in visitors to museums where ICT is an integral part of the product they offer.

2.2 The motivations underlying cultural consumption

The research field regarding the study of motivations underlying cultural consumption focuses on the analysis of those factors that influence the decision to purchase a cultural product.

This field of study is divided into two main research areas, reflecting the two different approaches to cultural marketing: on the one hand, studies devoted to the specific characteristics of the product that is able to influence the reasons for the cultural acquisition (factors of an intrinsic nature); on the other, contributions that analyse the variables regarding the consumer or the environment he/she comes from (factors of an extrinsic nature), which influence the motivations underlying cultural consumption.

The literature dedicated to the motivational field of research in the last decade seems to have shifted its focus; initially it focused on the specific characteristics of the cultural product or consumer, but then went on to adopt an approach that was based on both classes of variables, linked to the experiential approach, in which the relationship between the consumer and art work assumes bi-directional characteristics.

- a) As far as the theme linked to the characteristics of the cultural product is concerned, adopting an approach that focuses on a specific business area, the contribution by Kushner and Brooks (2000) discusses the characteristics of street performance while Hanley and Viney (2001) look at those of digital television, as possible motivations that might lead the public to adopt a certain cultural consumption behaviour. In both studies, the characteristic of interactivity of the cultural performance is highlighted as a particularly important element in the decision to purchase the live performance in the former, and the virtual interaction in the latter. A more formal theoretical approach is adopted by Urrutiaguer (2002) who puts forward a regression model to explain the demand for theatre in France, adding the specific characteristics of the cultural performance as independent variables, for example the price, number of performances offered by the theatre, the number of seats, performance quality and the dummy variables in particular: the critics, "directors-cum-managers" for the quality expected of the performance depending on the director, and the public financing the theatre received. The results from Urrutiaguer's paper (2002) suggest that all variables that are linked to the theatre's reputation are

important grounds for participating in a theatre performance, since these are characteristics the consumer uses to anticipate the quality of the production; these results have also been confirmed by a later study by Willis and Snowball (2009).

Cheng (2006) suggests a mixture of the product's and consumer's characteristics as a motivation for cultural consumption, and he puts forward a model in which the utility of the consumer is primarily influenced by the characteristics of the cultural production, but also by the cultural atmosphere and cultural capital that has accumulated in the society he is in. The contribution by Mencarelli (2008) follows a similar line of study, and suggests that the new experiential approach is of the greatest importance, placing the attention on the relationship between the consumer and art work at the centre. From this perspective, the motivations for cultural consumption are to be sought not only in the specific characteristics of the art work (symbolic, aesthetic, hedonistic dimensions, its irreproducible character, incomparable and unmeasurable), but also in the characteristics of the cultural environment in which the consumer lives.

- b) Studying a theme that is more closely linked to the *specific characteristics of the consumer*, López Sintas and García Álvarez (2002) adopt a more formal approach. Belonging to a different social class and the consumer's role in the family cycle have been identified as characteristic variables of different motivations for cultural consumption: those belonging to the lower social classes consume products associated with the rediscovery of traditional values and popular culture while the higher classes symbolise their superior social status by consuming modern products and those that are of high cultural content. Bourdieu's theory on how the social classes influence cultural behaviour is also the starting point for the study by Cladwell and Woodside (2003), which concentrates on cultural capital. According to the authors, motivation plays an intermediary role between cultural capital (which they are directly linked to) and cultural consumption (more specifically, the performing arts). In particular, the authors identify two groups of motivation for cultural consumption: those connected to high cultural capital and those linked to low cultural capital, which influence the consumers' choices differently. What emerges for the first time in this study is the identification of the motivations linked to low cultural capital, which do not seem to have received sufficient attention in literature in the past.

The consumer's subjective and psychological characteristics are the focus of Turrini's study (2006), paying attention to audience addiction towards cultural productions. The author puts forward a characteristic approach of the sectorial economy, using Markov's model to analyse the public's conative inclination to cultural consumption, taking into consideration the 'addiction' process in cultural production consumption. The variables regarding the consumer are also considered from a perspective that is of particular interest to the cultural industry, for example the role of critics, analysed by D'Astous et al. (2007) and Gemser et al. (2007) as a variable that influences motivations; both studies recognise that critics play an important informative role in the consumer's intention of a possible cultural purchase.

c) The approach adopted by Bourgeon-Renault et al. (2006) in their study is one that seems to have been of the most importance recently. The authors focus on the value of cultural consumption, analysing it from an experiential point of view. In the experience of cultural consumption both the psychological characteristics and specific attitudes of the consumer, and the symbolic, aesthetic and hedonistic value of the cultural product are of particular importance. According to this approach, the motivations underlying cultural consumption will not be found by adopting either one or the other perspective; on the contrary, a global vision of the experience is required. The authors offer an empirical application of this approach, analysing the results of a qualitative study on visitors and non, to French museums and monuments, with the objective of highlighting important managerial implications to improve the cultural offer in that sector. The results of the study highlight that there are two significant dimensions to the motivations underlying the experience of cultural consumption: *individual* and *collective*. The first concerns the levels of symbolism and hedonism, the cultural object's capacity to generate pleasure, enjoyment, emotions and sensations, and aesthetics, in other words, the association of art work consumption with beauty. On the other hand, the social dimension concerns the desire to be together, and sharing the experience. The objective of cultural organisations should therefore be to facilitate individual or social engagement towards the cultural object, for example by offering services that are complementary to the core of the offer, or other additional services that are not directly linked to the main offer but that help complete the experience as a whole (restaurants, cafés, shops, etc.). An additional important aspect that is underlined in this study is the role of entertainment as the motivation for cultural consumption, which, translated into managerial terms with the opportunity to increase visits in the museum sector through the theatricalisation of the experience, in which the act of consumption becomes a sort of show.

2.3 The segmentation of cultural demand

Probably the most traditional field of research, the segmentation of cultural demand, is dealt with in the literature from various approaches that are differentiated on the basis of the segmentation variables adopted. As proposed by Clopton and Stoddard (2006), the studies on segmentation can be classified in two dimensions depending on the variables adopted: the dimension of observability and the dimension of specificity.

On the basis of this classification scheme, four different types of research on the segmentation of cultural demand can be identified (Clopton and Stoddard, 2006, adapted by Wedel and Kamakura 2000):

- a. *Segmentation of general observable variables*: cultural, geographical, demographic and socio-economic variables,
- b. *Segmentation on product-specific observable variables*: client's status, frequency of use, loyalty, situational variables;

c. *Segmentation of general unobservable variables*: psychographic variables, values, personality;

d. *Segmentation on product-specific unobservable variables*: psychographic variables, perceptions, attributes, preferences and intentions.

a) In the first group are those studies that put forward a segmentation of cultural demand on "objective", robust and general variables that are not closely linked to any particular cultural production. The studies by Richeri (2002) and Gazzelloni (2002) follow this line of research and describe several behavioural patterns of cultural consumers in Italy, while the study by Brenstein (2003) studies the segmentation of visitors to museums and live shows in the United States. These papers mainly offer a general description of cultural demand and are often limited to one specific cultural sector. Chan and Goldthorpe's study (2005) adopts a more formal approach; they support the argument of the *omnivore-univore* consumer found in earlier literature, following the analysis of segmentation based on observable variables of a general nature and focused on the audiences of theatre, dance and cinema. The authors who focus on a socio-demographic analysis to study themes regarding cultural accessibility and cultural inequality offer a different line of research. Verdaasdonk's contribution (2005) is one of these and identifies the frequency of participation in film viewings as the result of interaction between the audience's characteristics (age, sex, level of education, and frequency of cultural consumption) and market factors. Gayo-Cal's study (2006) follows a similar line and analyses the consumption of free time in England from the point of view of consumer characteristics such as occupational class, gender, ethnic origins, level of education and age.

b) The second group is larger and includes those studies that adopt a segmentation analysis to observable variables while linking them to a specific cultural production. Prieto-Rodriguez and Fernandez-Blanco (2000) and Kolb (2001) study the segmentation of musical demand; the former try to identify a possible overlap (Fisher and Preece, 2002) between the consumers of classical and pop music while the latter carry out a detailed analysis of the effect of generational change on the participation of classical music concerts. The more recent study by Favaro and Frateschi (2007) puts forward a discrete choice model for the consumption of music, identifying the presence of different musical tastes in the Italian public, thus also supporting the argument of the *omnivore-univore* consumer. The methodological approach to the study of observable variables adopted by Petr (2002) is of particular interest; it adopts a semiotic approach to identify the different patterns of cultural consumption by tourists, and uses direct observation to record the specific variables of the paths consumers follow. Finally, the studies by Federico (2008), Grassi (2008), Barber (2008), Cicerchia (2008), Keaney and Oskala (2007) pay particular attention to the "youth" section, concentrating on the identification of homogeneous consumer groups within this segment.

c) The third group includes segmentation studies based on unobservable variables of a general nature, i.e. those usually gathered by administering a specific questionnaire and aimed at a general study

of the different behaviour of cultural consumption. The studies by Cuadrado and Mollà (2000), Clopton and Stoddard (2006) and Duranti et al. (2007) belong to this category. Worthy of note in these studies is the type of unobservable information that was gathered, as it makes this approach stand out from the previous, more traditional one. In the study by Cuadrado and Mollà (2000) the variables that are analysed regard personal objectives in cultural consumption, for example, “to feel emotion”, “entertainment”, “self-fulfilment”, “to share an experience”, etc. The structure of this analysis thus made it possible to identify four homogeneous consumer groups: *beginners*, who are mainly seeking emotional and educational satisfaction, *theatre buffs*, who want to satisfy their desire for cultural enrichment; *enthusiasts* who are seeking emotion, cultural education and social aspects; finally, the *indifferent*, who display clear apathy, and have no particular motivation towards cultural consumption. Clopton and Stoddard’s study (2006) uses two main groups as segmentation variables, that is, interest and familiarity with art, and preferences and supportive behaviour (financing, donations, etc.) towards cultural productions. Once again, the four profiles of consumers that are put forward are distinguished from one another on the basis of subjective characteristics such as preferences or inclinations towards particular cultural productions. The approach adopted by Duranti et al. (2007) is interesting with its use of focus groups that is based on a four-dimension interpretative grid: needs, expectations, aspirations and serendipity. The personal assessment of the aesthetic-cultural experience by the visitors then made it possible to distinguish three different profiles, which were significantly characterised by the consumer's subjective and psychological aspects.

- d) Finally, the last group includes those studies that were characterised by the use of unobservable variables and linked to one specific aspect of cultural production, for the purpose of demand segmentation. The studies that were selected all adopted a similar approach to those in the previous group, with the characteristic of the declination for specific cultural productions. Thus, Holbrook and Addis (2008) put forward a segmentation of cinema demand and Miesen (2002; 2004) demand for novels. A particularly interesting study in this group is the one by Wiggins (2004) which, adopting a theoretical approach puts forward a three-dimensional segmentation model recalling the RAND model by McCarthy and Jinnet (2001): the motivation to participate, the opportunity to participate and the ability to participate in cultural production. The intersection of these three dimensions leads to the identification of eight possible consumer profiles that are differentiated by their degree of involvement and different degrees of participation (also potential).

2.4 The main trends in literature on cultural consumption

The systematic analysis of the literature on cultural consumption was carried out on the basis of four variables for each field of study (relationship between consumer and art work, motivation, demand segmentation): research subject, level of analysis, methodology, presence and type of managerial implications. The results (table 1) highlight several tendencies that are described below.

a) As far as the research objective regarding the *relationship between the consumer and art work* (18 articles) is concerned, it can be seen that most of the articles (14) had the consumer's psychosociology as the *subject of their research*. The result confirms that the emotive, psychological aspects and therefore personal and subjective aspects are the variables that are the most used in studies on the consumer's cultural experience.

As far as the *level of analysis* adopted by the studies in question is concerned, the sectorial approach prevailed (14 articles): the choice of this level of analysis is characterised by the adoption of specific methodologies for the sector in question, and usually means the research results can be generalised to a lesser degree and extended only within the borders of the sector in question.

Table 1 – Analysis of literature on cultural consumption in the decade 2000-2009

OBJECTIVE	RESEARCH SUBJECT			LEVEL OF ANALYSIS			METHODOLOGY			STRATEGIC/OPERATIVE IMPLICATIONS			TOTAL
	Psycho-sociology of the consumer	Social consumption	Socio-demo-graphic variables of the consumer	Multi-sectorial	Sectorial	Business area	Qualitative	Quantitative	Triangular	Strategic	Operative	Not present	
The relationship between consumer and art	Alberini A.(2003), Belfiore E. (2007), Bourgeon-Renault D. (2001), Bourdeau L. (2001), Carù A. (2005), Collin-Lachaud I. (2008), Courvoisier F. H. (2008), Davallon J. (2000), Edson G. (2001), Fernandez G. (2000), Geber K. (2006), Goldman P. (2007), Mendes Zancheti S. (2002), Radbourne J. (2009)	Bussel H. (2006), Knerr G. (2000), O'Sullivan T. (2008),	Bazzanini E. (2003)	Belfiore E. (2007), Bourgeon-Renault D. (2001), Carù A. (2005)	Alberini A.(2003), Bourdeau L. (2001), Bussel H. (2006), Collin-Lachaud I. (2008), Courvoisier F. H. (2008), Davallon J. (2000), Edson G. (2001), Fernandez G. (2000), Geber K. (2006), Goldman P. (2007), Knerr G. (2000), Mendes Zancheti S. (2002), O'Sullivan T. (2008),Radbourne J. (2009)	Bazzanini E. (2003)	Belfiore E. (2007), Bourgeon-Renault D. (2001), Carù A. (2005), Collin-Lachaud I. (2008), Geber K. (2006), Goldman P. (2007), Knerr G. (2000), O'Sullivan T. (2008),Radbourne J. (2009)	Bourdeau L. (2001),Bussel H. (2006), Davallon J. (2000), Edson G. (2001), Mendes Zancheti S. (2002)	Alberini A.(2003), Bazzanini E. (2003),, Courvoisier F. H. (2008), Fernandez G. (2000)	Bazzanini E. (2003), Carù A. (2005), Collin-Lachaud I. (2008), Davallon J. (2000), Geber K. (2006), Knerr G. (2000), Mendes Zancheti S. (2002)	Bussel H. (2006), Courvoisier F. H. (2008), Edson G. (2001), Fernandez G. (2000), Goldman P. (2007), O'Sullivan T. (2008), Radbourne J. (2009)	Alberini A. (2003), Belfiore E. (2007), Bourgeon-Renault D. (2001), Bourdeau L. (2001)	
Tot.	14	3	1	3	14	1	9	5	4	7	7	4	18
Motivations	d'Astous A. (2002), d'Astous A. (2007), Bollo A. (2004), Burgeon-Renault D. (2006), Caldwell M. (2003), Cheng S. (2006), Cuadrado M. (2009), Gemser G. (2007), Hanley P. (2001), Hume M. (2008), Kushner R. J. (2000), Mencarelli R. (2008), Urrutiaguer D. (2002)	López Sintas J. (2002)	Ateca-Amestoy V. (2008) , Brooks A. C. (2004) , Collins A. (2008) , Harrison P. (2004) , Hill A. (2007) , Lin Y. N. (2008) , Pasquali F. (2002) , Turrini A. (2006) , Willis K. G. (2009)	Bollo A. (2004), Brooks A. C. (2004) , Burgeon-Renault D. (2006), Cheng S. (2006), López Sintas J. (2002) , Mencarelli R. (2008), Turrini A. (2006)	d'Astous A. (2002), d'Astous A. (2007), Ateca-Amestoy V. (2008) , Caldwell M. (2003), Collins A. (2008), Cuadrado M. (2009), Gemser G. (2007), Harrison P. (2004) , Hill A. (2007) , Hume M. (2008), Lin Y. N. (2008), Pasquali F. (2002), Urrutiaguer D. (2002)	Hanley P. (2001), Kushner R. J. (2000), Willis K. G. (2009)	Burgeon-Renault D. (2006), Caldwell M. (2003),	d'Astous A. (2002), Ateca-Amestoy V. (2008) , Brooks A. C. (2004), Cheng S. (2006), Cuadrado M. (2009), Collins A. (2008), Gemser G. (2007), Harrison P. (2004) , Hill A. (2007) , Kushner R. J. (2000), Lin Y. N. (2008) , López Sintas J. (2002) , Pasquali F. (2002) , Turrini A. (2006) , Urrutiaguer D. (2002) , Willis K. G. (2009)	d'Astous A. (2007), Bollo A. (2004), Hanley P. (2001), Hume M. (2008), Mencarelli R. (2008),	Bollo A. (2004), Caldwell M. (2003), Collins A. (2008) , Cuadrado M. (2009), Hanley P. (2001), Harrison P. (2004) , Hill A. (2007) , Hume M. (2008), Mencarelli R. (2008), Willis K. G. (2009)	d'Astous A. (2002), d'Astous A. (2007), Gemser G. (2007), Lin Y. N. (2008)	Ateca-Amestoy V. (2008) , Brooks A. C. (2004) , Burgeon-Renault D. (2006), Cheng S. (2006), Kushner R. J. (2000), López Sintas J. (2002) , Pasquali F. (2002) , Turrini A. (2006) , Urrutiaguer D. (2002)	
Tot.	13	1	9	7	13	3	2	16	5	10	4	9	23

OBJECTIVE	RESEARCH SUBJECT			LEVEL OF ANALYSIS			METHODOLOGY			STRATEGIC/OPERATIVE IMPLICATIONS			Tot.
	Psycho-sociology of the consumer	Social consumption	Socio-demo-graphic variables of the consumer	Multi-sectorial	Sectorial	Business area	Qualitative	Quantitative	Triangular	Strategic	Operative	Not present:	
Segmentation	Barber T. (2008) , Bernstein J. S. (2003) , Clopton S. W. (2006) , Cuadrado M. (2000) , Duranti C. (2007) , Miesen H. (2004), Petr C. (2002) , Wiggins J. (2004)	Holbrook M. B. (2008)	Cicerchia A. (2008) , Corning J. (2002) , Federico C. (2008) , Favaro D. (2007) , Fisher T. C. G. (2002) , Fuortes C. (2006) , Gazzelloni S. (2002) , Gayo-Cal M. (2006), Grassi R. (2008) , Keaney E. (2007) , Kolb B. (2001) , Miesen H. (2002) , Prieto-Rodriguez J. (2000), Richeri G. (2002) , Ringstad V. (2006) , Stumpo G. (2006), Verdaasdonk D. (2005), Wing Chan T. (2005)	Barber T. (2008) , Clopton S. W. (2006) , Cicerchia A. (2008) , Duranti C. (2007) , Gazzelloni S. (2002), Gayo-Cal M. (2006), Grassi R. (2002) , Keaney E. (2007), Ringstad V. (2006), Stumpo G. (2006), Wiggins J. (2004) , Wing Chan T. (2005)	Bernstein J. S. (2003) , Corning J. (2002) , Cuadrado M. (2001) , Favaro D. (2007) , Fisher T. C. G. (2002) , Fuortes C. (2006) , Holbrook M. B. (2008) , Petr C. (2002) , Richeri G. (2002) , Ringstad V. (2006), Verdaasdonk D. (2005)	Federico C. (2008) , Kolb B. (2001) , Miesen H. (2002) , Miesen H. (2004) , Prieto-Rodriguez J. (2000)	Barber T. (2008) , Cicerchia A. (2008) , Petr C. (2002) , Wiggins J. (2004)	Clopton S. W. (2006) , Corning J. (2002) , Favaro D. (2007) , Federico C. (2008) , Fisher T. C. G. (2002) , Fuortes C. (2006) , Gayo-Cal M. (2006), Grassi R. (2008) , Holbrook M. B. (2008) , Keaney E. (2007) , Kolb B. (2001) , Miesen H. (2002) , Miesen H. (2004) , Prieto-Rodriguez J. (2000) , Richeri G. (2002) , Ringstad V. (2006) , Stumpo G. (2006), Verdaasdonk D. (2005), Wing Chan T. (2005)	Bernstein J. S. (2003) , Cuadrado M. (2000) , Duranti C. (2007)	Barber T. (2008), Brenstein J. S. (2003) , Cicerchia A. (2008) , Clopton S. W. (2006) , Duranti C. (2007) , Federico C. (2008) , Fuortes C. (2006) , Gayo-Cal M. (2006), Grassi R. (2008) , Holbrook M. B. (2008) , Keaney E. (2007) , Kolb B. (2001) , Miesen H. (2002) , Miesen H. (2004) , Prieto-Rodriguez J. (2000) , Richeri G. (2002) , Ringstad V. (2006), Stumpo G. (2006), Wiggins J. (2004) , Wing Chan T. (2005)	Cuadrado M. (2000) , Keaney E. (2007) , Miesen H. (2004)	Corning J. (2002), Favaro D. (2007), Fisher T. C. G. (2002), Gayo-Cal M. (2006), Grassi R. (2008) , Petr C. (2002) , Prieto-Rodriguez J. (2000) , Richeri G. (2002) , Ringstad V. (2006), Verdaasdonk D. (2005), Wiggins J. (2004), Wing Chan T. (2005)	27
Tot.	8	1	18	11	11	5	4	20	3	12	3	12	27
Tot.	35	5	28	21	38	9	15	41	12	29	14	25	68

Note: For major clarity the table only includes the first author and year of publication.

The *methodology* adopted by most of the studies was qualitative, and was used by half of the studies that were analysed. This result suggests that the qualitative methodology is the one that best meets the analytical needs associated with this field of research, although quantitative methodology is also used to a certain extent (5 articles) as is a combination of the two (4 articles).

Finally, as far as the *managerial implications* are concerned, it can be seen that there are only few contributions in which these are absent, while in the remaining contributions the prevalently strategic and prevalently operative implications are distributed equally. The objective of studying the relationship between the consumer and art work therefore appears to be linked to an attempt to associate the results to direct implications and translations in the strategic-operative field of cultural organisations.

- b) Analysis of the contributions (23 articles) concerning the research objective on *motivations underlying cultural consumption* shows that attention is mainly paid to the consumer's psycho-sociological and socio-demo-geographical variables. Indeed, studies based on subjective variables and those regarding the emotional sphere of the consumer clearly prevail, as do studies based on the analysis of objective and observable variables, in comparison to variables linked to social consumption behaviour. This result might indicate two different approaches to the analysis of the motivations: a more traditional one linked to demand segmentation, based on socio-demo-geographical variables, and another more recent one, linked to the psychological and individual aspects of the cultural consumer. For nearly all the contributions in question, the *analysis level* was at a sectorial level, with the consequent specificity of the study; it is interesting to observe that a number of the studies on the motivations of the cultural consumer are transversal to the cultural industry. Only very few cases focus more closely on the business area and those that do study the motivations that drive the public to consumption behaviour that is closely linked to a specific cultural production. The results regarding the *methodology* adopted clearly shows that the quantitative approach prevails in this kind of research field, used together with qualitative methods in some cases as a support in the triangular approach. The variable concerning *managerial implications* also provides different results compared to the previous research field, with an equal distribution of contributions including implications of a strategic nature and contributions without any managerial implications. This result seems to suggest that the research field on motivations is focused on a more theoretical approach, probably with the objective of identifying the characteristics of cultural consumption; on the other hand, one can also observe the beginnings of a trend to use the knowledge of motivations to outline the managerial strategy of cultural organizations.

- c) Finally, the third and last research objective to be analysed was the one regarding the *segmentation* of the cultural demand, and it was on this theme that more articles (27) focused than the previous objectives. Most of the studies put forward socio-demo-geographical variables as their *research subject*, with a demand segmentation of an “objective” nature. Very few studies offer a segmentation that is based on the psycho-sociology of the consumer, revealing a new tendency compared to the more traditional demand segmentation. This tendency towards the study of subjective and unobservable characteristics of the consumer can be interpreted as a response to the growing need

for a more intense experience of cultural consumption from a holistic perspective, in which the psycho-sociological characteristics of the consumer are of increasing importance. As regards the *level of analysis*, the results appear to be equally distributed between the multi-sectorial level, which studies segmentations of cultural demand of a transversal nature, and the sectorial level, which looks at different segments of public consumption in a specific cultural sector. Once again, and even more clearly than in the previous field of research, the most commonly used *methodology* is one of a quantitative nature, probably because of the frequency with which hard socio-demographic data is used. An interesting result emerged from the variable of *managerial implications*: barely half of the studies analysed offered indications of a strategic or operative nature. Indeed, the very nature of the studies on demand segmentation would suggest their more direct use in the management of cultural organisations, which would then be able to establish a differentiation of the service being offered on the basis of the most significant variables. The fact that only half of the studies actually consider implications of a strategic nature (while very few cases consider operative implications) leads one to conclude that the use of the results of segmentation in the management of cultural organisations have not yet been studied in particular depth.

3. Conclusions

Cultural consumption is increasing and so are its characteristics. However, the national and local statistics in advanced countries do not appear to be able to satisfy the need for information regarding this consumption. In future it will therefore be increasingly necessary to study this phenomenon in greater detail.

A summary of the results of the analysis of specialist literature (in English and one Italian journal) from the last ten years highlights some of the prevalent tendencies (table 2). This academic research concentrated on the psycho-sociological and socio-demo-geographic variables of the consumer of cultural products, paying the most attention to the sectorial sector, often adopting quantitative methods of study, considering implications of a strategic nature or omitting to specify any managerial effects of the studies.

The prevalent tendencies highlight how great attention is still dedicated to the segmentation of cultural demand, but the analysis of motivations underlying cultural consumption is significantly acquiring more importance. The attention to motivations hidden behind different cultural consumption behaviours probably arises from the increasing competition for conquer consumers' free time: in a rapidly changing competitive environment, where offers are continuously increasing and differentiating, deepen the understanding about motivations underlying consumption behaviours become one of the priorities of scientific research. The analysis allowed also to identify vast research areas in which cultural consumption has only been partially studied, such as: social consumption, studies on individual businesses, methodological triangulation, and the operative implications for business management.

To conclude, it seems worth to highlight how the same analyses on cultural consumption are parallelly developed by other scientific branches, such as the social psychology and the economics: in both these

branches, for example, the role of motivations and emotions has been emphasized. The marketing literature, far from being isolated, interacts with the other fields of research reflecting those issues that can be considered more general trends.

Table 2 – Summary of the tendencies prevalent in literature on cultural consumption 2000-2009

	Research object	Level of analysis	Methodology	Managerial implications
Relationship between consumer and art work	Psycho-sociology of the consumer	Sectorial	Qualitative	Strategic
				Operative
Motivations	Psycho-sociology of the consumer	Sectorial	Quantitative	Strategic
	Socio-demo-geographic variables of the consumer			Not present
Segmentation of demand	Socio-demo-geographic variables of the consumer	Sectorial	Quantitative	Strategic
		Multi-sectorial		Not present

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